

Power Outages

Everyone experiences power interruptions from time to time. Many of these outages come at times of weather extremes or accompany various disasters. When the power is out, safety becomes a major concern. The following information is meant to help you when the **lights go out!**

- Register life-sustaining equipment with your utility company.
- Make sure you have an alternate heat source and supply of fuel.
- Consider purchasing a generator, especially if someone in the house requires life-sustaining equipment that runs on electricity.
- When installing generators, follow the manufacturer's instructions very carefully.
- If your house is the only one without power, check your fuse box or circuit breaker panel. Turn off appliances before replacing fuses or resetting circuits.
- If power is out in the neighborhood, disconnect all electrical heaters and appliances to reduce the initial demand and protect the motors from possible low voltage damage.
- Unplug computers and other voltage sensitive equipment to protect them against possible surges when the power is restored.
- Conserve water, especially if you are on a well.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed. If the door remains closed, a fully loaded freezer can keep foods frozen for two days.
- Never use a charcoal barbecue inside the home.
- If you use candles for light keep in mind they can cause a fire. It's far better to use batteries operated flashlights or glow sticks for alternative lighting.
- If you use a kerosene heater, gas lantern or stove inside the house, maintain ventilation to avoid a build up of toxic fumes.
- If your power is out leave a light switch in the on position to alert you when services are restored.
- If you own an electric garage door opener, learn how to open the door without power.
- Prepare a power outage kit, or better yet make it a part of your disaster preparedness kit. Consider having light sticks, flashlights, a battery-powered radio, with extra batteries and a wind-up clock as a part of the kit.
- Have a corded telephone available; remember cordless phones will not work when the power is out.